

TOWN OF MERRIMAC

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News Release

For Immediate Release:

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Town of Merrimac to Receive Stewardship Award

(Merrimac, WI) - The Town of Merrimac has been selected as a recipient of a 2004 Stewardship Award as presented annually by the Natural Heritage Land Trust (NHLT). The Town is being recognized for its efforts to conserve land on Lake Wisconsin for park and conservation space.

The Town purchased property known as the Clingman property on the shore of Weigand's Bay last November. This accomplishment will be recognized during The Stewardship Awards Celebration at the Madison Concourse Hotel on Thursday, May 6. The NHLT will be presenting five awards this year, including three for lifetime achievement.

The Town received a \$195,000 Lake Protection Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and has raised a little over \$45,000 in private donations. The town is still seeking to raise an additional \$15,000 to cover the \$260,000 cost of the property.

The town plans to work out an arrangement with the DNR to manage the property along with the other lands the DNR has acquired next door. Some of the early vision for the park shows the town's portion mainly being used for fishing access, hiking trails and nature observation points. When Hwy. 78 is abandoned, it is possible the abandoned stretch along the bay could be utilized for handicapped fishing. The DNR also has a long range vision of providing day camping sites and possibly boat access on its portion. Throughout the bay, the DNR has

also budgeted for improving the fish habitat with off shore reefs and fish cribs. DNR officials are cautious about their future plans as these projects take funding and might not be able to happen for several years.

People interested in donating money to this project can send it to the "Town of Merrimac Clingman Fund" and mail it to: Town of Merrimac, Attn: Tim McCumber, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer, P.O. Box 115, Merrimac, WI 53561. McCumber is also available to speak to area groups or business and to answer any inquiries about the project. He can be contacted at (608) 643-6332 or by email at mccumber@shopstop.net. You can also find more information about the park at <http://www.tn.merrimac.wi.gov>.

Persons interested in attending The Stewardship Awards Celebration can attend by contacting Tim McCumber at the Town for ticket information. Tickets are \$30.00 per person and requests should be made by April 15th.

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